



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

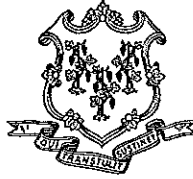
Testimony of Representative Michelle Cook, 65th District of Torrington
Labors and Public Employees Committee Public Hearing
February 17th, 2015

Regarding: HB 5871

Thank you to the Labor and Public Employees Committee for bringing this bill to the public hearing today. HB 5871 would expand worker's compensations for firefighters and police officers.

There are currently 70,000 distinct chemicals that are commercially used in the United States. Approximately 1,000 more chemicals are registered each year with the United States Environmental Protection Agency. Unfortunately, tests for carcinogenic and other toxic effects of newly introduced chemicals lag behind production time. Our emergency personnel as exposed to chemicals with unknown effects daily. Specific linkages have been drawn between various types of cancer and chemicals encountered during firefighting. Leukemia is caused by benzene and 1,3- butadiene. Lymphoma and multiple myeloma are caused by benzene and 1,3- butadiene. Skin cancer is caused by soot containing PAH. Genitourinary tract cancer is caused by gasoline and PAH. The connections continue and they are staggering. The environment that our firemen work in is clearly riddled with health hazards that can pose fatal consequences.

Research has shown that firemen are more likely than the average patient to contract testicular cancer (2.02 times greater risk), multiple myeloma (1.53 times), and Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma (1.51 times) among other forms of cancer. This legislation prescribes that in order to receive any level of presumptive care, firemen must submit to annual physical examinations. Even firemen who maintain active life styles can still



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develop this disease, so an increased level of monitoring will allow for early detection and relief with hypertension issues.

You have heard the story of Daniel Huften, a Torrington resident and former Waterbury fireman. He is bravely continuing to undergo treatment for cancer that developed as a result of his work. It is irresponsible to not do all that we can to take proactive measures in offering more comprehensive workers compensation plans for our firemen.

I thank you for your consideration of HB 5871. Please feel free to contact my office should you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle L. Cook".

Rep. Michelle Cook